The Taste of You

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/26671927.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Hannibal (TV), Hannibal Lecter Series - All Media Types
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham & Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham's Dogs, Jack Crawford (mentioned)
Additional Tags:	Character Study, Established Relationship, Poetic, No Dialogue, Cannibalistic Thoughts, Senses, Implied/Referenced Sex, Manipulative Hannibal Lecter, Relationship Study, POV Hannibal Lecter
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of Will Graham and Hannibal Lecter
Stats:	Published: 2020-09-27 Words: 3,517 Chapters: 1/1

The Taste of You

by Ooft

Summary

"Hannibal Lecter has spent nights upon nights simply watching Will Graham sleep. Even after all this time, all these years spent resting beside him, it fascinates Hannibal endlessly, each night seeming different from the last, a slight and subtle change appearing in Will’s posture or breathing or manner, generally without a discernible cause."

In which Hannibal ponders over his relationship with Will Graham and the effects it has on him, exploring Will with all but one of his five senses.

Notes

Forgive me for the punny title, I couldn't help myself.

See the end of the work for more notes

Hannibal Lecter has spent nights upon nights simply watching Will Graham sleep. Even after all this time, all these years spent resting beside him, it fascinates Hannibal endlessly, each night seeming different from the last, a slight and subtle change appearing in Will's posture or breathing or manner, generally without a discernible cause.

Tonight is another night he spends watching. Will's eyes shift back and forth behind his eyelids at a rapid pace, nose twitching occasionally and his breath stuttering, though fast. Sweat forms at the frame of his face and his neck, soaking through the collar and chest of his shirt, turning the once-light grey into a dark, stormy colour. Gasping, Will's eyes snap open and his head swings around to gaze across the room, before his fearful, yet empty stare falls upon Hannibal. Within a second, his grimacing lips stretch to a pained smile.

They don't speak as Will shuffles over to lie closer to Hannibal, to rest his head against Hannibal's shoulder and wrap an arm around his waist. Both of them know what Will's dreams consist of; to speak of it is to waste air. Instead of talking, Hannibal brushes Will's wet hair back from his face, revealing those strange, contradicting features he'd fallen in love with when Jack Crawford first introduced the two men: the sharp jaw that would jut defiantly, but also tremble whenever Will was scared; the wrinkled forehead, intent to betray any sign of youth that still lingers in Will's ever-aging face; the lips that Hannibal knows has always yearned for his own, yet are always so cautious and seemingly unwilling when given permission to commit to its whims. Everything about Will Graham is a contradiction to his nature, and Hannibal cannot help but be intrigued by it, despite all the inconveniences it has caused him over the years.

Will doesn't fall asleep immediately, opting to stare blankly past Hannibal and to the open window of their bedroom, seeing without processing. *His gaze falls there often these days,* Hannibal notices, *perhaps searching to escape something, to be caught in the breeze and spirited away.* It seems a comforting thought, however unattainable. Will Graham has always been enraptured by the unattainable, has always wanted to take it for his own, curious as to what will happen. Hannibal knows because he feels the same way.

Unblinking, Will continues to stare at the window, his eyes shifting to follow the movement of the curtains that shake languidly in the breeze. The sweating has stopped, Will's breathing slows and his heartbeat pulses gently against Hannibal's shoulder. Will breathes in sharply and blinks, his empty trance coming undone. He tells Hannibal he had a dream and leaves it at that, doesn't explain what occurred or why - there's no point, Hannibal already knows. In response to Will's confession, Hannibal hums softly and nods, rubbing his hands through Will's hair and teasing it between his fingers as he mulls over his thoughts. The dark of night with a lover by your side is always a good time to think, he's learnt over the years. Whether it is true with Will Graham, Hannibal still isn't sure.

His thoughts at night are often interrupted by Will, whether he is doing it on purpose or accidentally. Sometimes Will speaks to him, breaking his peace of mind and offering Hannibal his own thoughts on an issue, somehow knowing exactly what it is Hannibal is thinking of. Other times, Will wakes up from a dream and looks over to Hannibal with an inexplicable expression of fear and horror, though that glint quickly fades from his eyes and he curls in beside Hannibal, sighing and content to lie in silence, staring at the open window.

It’s strange, the noises Will makes. He is similar to the dogs he is so obsessed with in the sense that, like them, he is incapable of silencing himself, his feelings indicated through verbal cues when body language and words can’t express his thoughts. After all that’s happened, all the deaths and crimes and dinner parties, Will has come to speak less, hardly speaking at all with anyone who isn’t Hannibal. Hannibal can’t say he is disappointed with the development; Will falling silent in the presence of others and relying on Hannibal to speak for him has always been the one thing Hannibal wanted more than anything, progressing eventually into a craving, before snapping into a need. A need that has very much been met.

The most Will speaks is when him and Hannibal sit by the fire together, glasses of liquor or wine in hand. The flames shine a dancing light over Will's face - that is Hannibal’s favourite time to gaze upon him. In mythology, it is argued flames are the giver of life, turning Prometheus’ clay figures into real people, and giving them the ability to truly thrive. In other tales, fire is a taker and destroyer, ravaging the lands that stand in its path, unforgiving and unrelenting in the way it kills mercilessly, reigning death unending. Hannibal sees both sides of the flame in Will Graham’s face. Eyes are supposed to be the gateway to the soul, the indicator of one's emotions when all else failed, yet Will, in his psychopathic ways, has entirely dead and empty eyes that can only reflect the imagery they are met with, not absorb or show it. Where other animal’s eyes show you their fear, Will Graham’s don't - the sounds he makes do. It's in the way he growls when faced with anger, whines when faced with pain, laughs when faced with death and chokes when faced with happiness. Hannibal believes every noise is just as fascinating as the last.

In fact, if you ask Hannibal, every detail of Will Graham is just as interesting as the last. The way he smells is another thing Hannibal is enraptured by, overwhelmed by the constant urge to lean in and breathe Will’s scent in whenever he passes by, especially when Hannibal knows Will has been to a foreign location. Even though Hannibal lavishes Will at every chance he gets, leaves him wanting for nothing, Will insists on going out and fishing. Hannibal lets him go, of course, because it makes Will happy, but also because when Will comes back home there is something decidedly different about him. He leaves the house smelling like Hannibal, like the smoke of the fireplace, like the herbs and spices of the kitchen. He returns to the home smelling like earth and rain, the faintest undertone of fish blood lurking in his skin.

Sometimes Will leaves to go to the grocery store and when he gets back he smells like antiseptic and hand sanitiser, his clothes carrying the smells of other people along with him like parasites. When he wanders the streets, he smells like snatches of perfume and other people’s sweat. When at home, Hannibal can smell his own scent on Will’s skin, the dull husk of his aftershave and the sweet traces of alcohol or the freshness of mint, depending on the time of day and how often Will came near him or perhaps touched him. The acrid smell of dogs always lingers in Will’s clothes, wafting up most strongly from the calves of his pants where the creatures have rubbed him and licked. Will smiles and jokes that they are kissing him; Hannibal believes they are claiming him, but doesn’t voice the opinion. When it comes to loving Will Graham, some things are best left unsaid, Hannibal has learnt.

One of Hannibal's silences is in regards to telling Will too much about what he looks like. Hannibal would love it more than anything if he could tell Will how beautiful he looks, to tell

him how he is seen by the world around him, but Hannibal knows better than to act on his whims. Will, unlike him, is not a proud man in his appearances, meeting compliments on his physicality with an awkward grimace and nod, or, if the compliment is from someone he knows well, he simply waves them off with a dismissive grunt. It is as endearing as it is infuriating, for the one you love to not understand part of the reason why you love them so much.

In the past years, Hannibal has taken often to depicting Will in his sketches, though he does so without Will's knowledge. Realistically, Will probably does know, but he hasn't mentioned it to Hannibal yet, so Hannibal continues to draw him when he can, keeping his sketchbook on the bedside table so he can capture Will in a series of drawings he's come to title 'La belle au bois dormant'. By now, Hannibal is perfectly capable of drawing Will's face through his memory - always has been, even before they realised their love for one another - but he doesn't *want* to draw Will from memory, because he is obsessed with Will's face and has a need to see it, his memory simply not being enough to truly capture the feeling of Will, his existence and purpose. It's already hard enough to do it when Will is in front of him.

If Will's dreams and commentaries aren't enough to wake Hannibal in the night, his perpetually cold feet and hands are. Countless times, Hannibal's eyes have snapped open when a cold foot has ghosted against his knee, forcing his body to jerk involuntarily, a tactic evolutionised from man's ancestors to strike fear in the hearts of both predators and lesser creatures, as well as to jump-start the human body. Hannibal often questions whether his body considers Will as predator or prey. He always ends with the same hypothesis: perhaps it switches, depending on how Will has behaved that day.

Will Graham always feels cold to the touch, like he is hiding an icy interior from the world with a layer of lukewarm skin, stretched painfully across his body to hide the true danger lurking within. Hannibal always marvelled at his efforts, adopted some of Will’s habits for himself. Will noticed the change, but he never said anything and still doesn’t to this day.

Despite Will’s cool temperature, Hannibal likes to hold him, to take pleasure in the other sensations of Will’s skin. Hannibal likes that when he kisses Will, he is met with slightly chapped lips that turn soft with enough teasing and pulling, easily turning swollen and red if worked with enough. Hannibal likes the contradiction of Will’s soft skin to the prickly scruff growing along his jaw, the way it scratches Hannibal wherever it touches, sometimes leaving a dull red rash that will only last a few minutes before disappearing as though it were never there. Hannibal likes feeling the calluses that braise the tips of Will’s fingertips; a strange place to have calluses, but Hannibal knows it is because of all the fishing Will does, the lines and bait-crafting having torn away at his pliable skin over the years until it became harsh and rough, in a similar way to how the human mind adjusts to trauma.

Lumps of muscle sit beneath Will's skin, hard and yet malleable, compliant to shift when Hannibal's fingers dig into them, creaking and groaning along with Will's precious bones. *So many of these muscles go unused,* Hannibal thinks to himself as he presses his hands over Will's body, desperate to feel it, *it seems such a waste not to eat them, put them to good use.*

But Hannibal Lecter forbids himself from eating Will Graham. After all this time spent loving him, such an animalistic gesture could only be seen as rude.

Hannibal was *not* rude.

The closest Hannibal gets to eating Will is when they make love. It is a rare thing, though Hannibal doesn't think of it as an 'occasion' - it is more simply an 'occurrence'. It happens infrequently, unplanned and unceremonious as Will entices him and seduces him in the most intentional and yet unintentional way. Attraction sparks in Hannibal each time he has the pleasure of gazing upon Will, but lust is something that rarely consumes Hannibal. A soft smile and a clever comment from Will are enough to capture his interest, though he reigns in all animalism when Will comes to stand in his arms, Hannibal holding him close and securing him rather than ripping him apart to have a taste. Even with all his rough edges and inhuman nature, Will lays his soul bare for Hannibal in those quiet moments of pre-sex tension and Hannibal can see the absolute quiet of Will's mind, see as he takes pleasure in Hannibal's gentle touch, see as he leans into it and begs for more with those soft whimpers that so often fall from his yearning lips.

The rare times they do make love, Hannibal takes it to the bedroom. Over the years, there have been very few exceptions to that rule; it happened once in the kitchen, another in the library and one more time in the study. There had been a time when Will tried to entice Hannibal into having sex by the fireplace, but Hannibal refused. Fires hold too much life for one room already, living rooms being designed for people, for being explored and to take comfort in. A bedroom, however, is a lonely room, isolated from the world and in need of life breathing within it to truly serve its purpose - that is why Hannibal makes love to Will in the bedroom.

Making love is when all five of Hannibal's senses are able to come together and truly paint a picture of Will Graham. So many delicious sounds escape Will's parted lips, a symphony of moans, whines and gasps that rise and fall like music, often crossing over each other and creating an uneven melody that Hannibal tries his best to find pattern in, but never can. Hannibal kisses a part of Will's neck and Will gasps. Hannibal kisses it again in the same way, and that gasp turns into a breathy moan, haunting and ghostly, ringing and echoing through the room and escaping through the open window, swept up in the curtains and tossed into the wind. As things progress, Will’s gasps turn into moans and whines, ones that make Hannibal lean in and capture his lips, swallowing the sounds and tasting them on his tongue, sweet like the honey of wild bees, with bitter undertones like the finest wine. Such a refined and exquisite taste, satisfying a lusty, romantic part of Hannibal’s tongue, though not all of it.

Sweat, aftershave and spice are what often clings to Will’s lovely skin when him and Hannibal make love, the scents drifting through the air and mingling in a way that should be repulsive and offensive, yet somehow each smell ends up complementing the others in a similar manner to how colours from opposite sides of the colour wheel complement each other, the contrast reflecting only the best in its partner. Each part of Will’s body smells subtly different to another part and Hannibal loves each spot, though his favourites are Will’s neck and wrists. With Will lying beneath him in a writhing, moaning mess, Hannibal likes to lean in and bury his nose into the crook of Will’s neck, breathing in the scents Will carries where they are strongest, the sweat below his jaw and soft, absorbent skin making the scent of spice all the more pungent and strong, aftershave overpowering both smells like a bitter wave, enough to make Hannibal feel pleasantly dizzy and searching for more. He rubs his nose along the side of Will’s neck and travels down along his chest and arm to stop at Will’s

wrist, feeling Will's erratic pulse and breathing in the strong smell of spice and brush of aftershave. The aftershave leaves an acidic taste in Hannibal's mouth and throat, while Will's sweat tastes both sweet and salty, enhanced by the fresh tang of the spices. It satisfies a more nostalgic and rustic part of Hannibal's tongue, though not all of it.

If Hannibal could pull out his notebook and draw the way Will looks as they make love, he would do it. There is something truly enchanting about the way Will's lips part as he moans, the manner in which his head tilts back at an impossible angle, revealing the soft, pale skin of his neck to display a shaking adam's apple, bobbing up and down with each gasping breath. Will is never neat, Hannibal knows, but he is at his messiest when they make love, his hair spilling over his face and onto the bed, his limbs shaking at odd angles, body heaving with effort as he tries to keep up with Hannibal. Everything in his submissive, quivering form shows defeat, as if allowing Hannibal to pleasure him is the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden, his closed eyes too fearful to meet God's, draping a loose wrist over them to make it even more difficult for God to see him.

Despite the careful nature in which he avoids God's gaze, Will sometimes opens his eyes to stare at Hannibal, half-lidded with his eyebrows drawn together and nose scrunched in ecstasy. It's in those moments that Hannibal truly loses himself, giving into his most basic and carnal desires. He pleases Will as well as he can, watching with a smile as Will comes apart and splits at the seams, shuddering and sweating, glowing in the light coming from the open window, the curtains making shadows dance across his skin. He is truly beautiful and satisfying in those moments, gratifying the most dream-like tastes on Hannibal's tongue, though not all of it.

Even when they make love, Will is cold to touch, sweat clinging to his skin in a clammy rather than exerted way. Hannibal takes Will's nude form as an opportunity to kiss his skin, to feel it beneath his lips and against his tongue in all its soft, rough beauty, the puckers of scars and the lumps of freckles being particular points of interest. Their abrupt nature is what captures Hannibal's attention, each one with a story and purpose for Will. When Hannibal's hands drift over Will's body, he feels as the muscles beneath shake and become soft, giving way to Hannibal's whims without question. His favourite thing to do - even outside of making love - is to reach out to Will's chin and let his fingers push up, dragging Will's lip along with them and forcing his face into an expression that would usually be considered a beastly snarl, if not for his eyes rolling back into his head as he whines lengthily, begging for Hannibal to push harder and further, to feel him in his entirety and take all he can give, then take some more. Hannibal likes to cup Will's face in his hands instead, feeling the rough stubble beneath his fingers and stroking it as he presses his lips to Will's and turns those chapped lips soft. Will's shivering body pressed against Hannibal's allows for their heartbeats to mingle, pulsing against each other at a desperate, erratic pace, as though they may both burst out and enterwine, wanting to weave their veins and arteries together in some beautiful, grotesque tapestry. The feeling of Will pleases the lighter, sweeter tastes of Hannibal's tongue, though not all of it.

Hannibal has come to accept that he can never kill Will, never get a taste of him, never be able to hold Will's limp body in his arms and carry him to the kitchen. It seems such a shame, but losing Will from his life seems worse. Hannibal's attachment to him is jarring and maddening, though hearing, smelling, seeing and feeling Will each day is enough to make it

all worth it and keep his taste buds at bay, satisfied with the flavours of Will's skin and mouth.

Coming out of his thoughts, Hannibal notices that Will has fallen back asleep, breathing slowly and deeply, his chest pressing against Hannibal's arm. After a few minutes, his breathing startles and he rolls away from Hannibal to the middle of the bed, away from the open window. Hannibal grabs his sketchbook and turns on the lamp of the bedside table, putting the pencil to the paper and drawing Will's sleeping form, the slender curve of Will's back, the jutting of his shoulder blades and the mess of his hair. When the piece is finished, he admires the vulnerability of Will's body, the shaking, breakable quality of it. He's so very beautiful.

Hannibal turns the lamp off and places his sketchbook back onto the bedside table, then lies down beside Will. Curious as to what will happen, he wraps his arm around Will's ribs, his other arm lining Will's back and allowing his fingers to brush against the skin on the small of Will's back where his shirt has ridden up. Breath catching and stuttering, Will stirs, his arms jolting, before settling back down with a sigh and falling limp again. Hannibal rubs his hand against Will's chest, ribs and stomach until he too drifts off to sleep.

End Notes

That was... an experience. Will and Hannibal's relationship is interesting to me, so I might write about it more. We'll see.

Feel free to comment and leave me with your thoughts! This is my first time writing in this kind of poetic style, as I felt like Hannibal has a very intricate internal monologue, given his dialogue in the show and the imagery of his murders.

'La belle au bois dormant' is French for 'Sleeping Beauty' (according to my friends), the title given to Hannibal's depictions of Will.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!